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Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3868th Meeting

Tuesday, 31 March 1998, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Sallah	(Gambia)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Amolo
	Portugal	Mr. Soares
	Russian Federation	Mr. Fedotov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Lidén
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Richmond
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

Letter dated 11 March 1998 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/223)

Letter dated 27 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/272)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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Letter dated 27 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/272)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, Egypt, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Pakistan, Poland, Turkey and Ukraine, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nesho (Albania), Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Fowler (Canada), Mr. Šimonović (Croatia), Mr. Elaraby (Egypt), Mr. Eitel (Germany), Mr. Zacharakis (Greece), Mr. Erdös (Hungary), Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy), Mr. Kamal (Pakistan), Mr. Wyzner (Poland), Mr. Tanç (Turkey) and Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I have received a request dated 31 March 1998 from Mr. Vladislav Jovanović to address the Council. With the consent of the Council, I would propose to invite him to address the Council in the course of its discussion of the item before it.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the letter dated 11 March 1998 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/1998/223, and the letter dated 27 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/1998/272.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1998/284, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following other documents: S/1998/225, identical letters dated 11 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the General Assembly; S/1998/229, S/1998/240 and S/1998/250, letters dated 12, 16 and 18 March 1998, respectively, from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; S/1998/234, letter dated 13 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/1998/246, letter dated 17 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

Members of the Council have received photocopies of a letter dated 30 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, which will be issued as document S/1998/285.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Owada (Japan): The Government of Japan is deeply concerned about the recent deterioration of the situation in Kosovo, which, tragically, has resulted in a mounting death toll. Japan strongly condemns both the use of excessive force by the Serbian police against civilians in Kosovo and the use of violence, especially acts of terrorism, by the Kosovo Liberation Army or anyone else as a means to achieve political goals. My delegation recognizes that the current situation in Kosovo poses a threat to international peace and security in the region and that the further spread of violence there might lead to the destabilization of the entire Balkans.

Against this background, the draft resolution before us is intended to send a clear and concerted message by the Security Council that the parties concerned must stop this violence in Kosovo in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and begin the process of finding a solution to the serious political and human rights problems there. We are convinced that this draft resolution, which includes a decision to impose an arms embargo against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, will be, upon its adoption, an effective instrument to prevent the further spread of such violence.

The basic position of Japan on the problem of Kosovo, which I believe it shares with the rest of the international community, is that neither the repression of the human and political rights of the Albanian population in Kosovo nor the separation and independence of Kosovo is acceptable. My Government urges the authorities in Belgrade and the leadership of the Albanian community in Kosovo to immediately enter into a substantive dialogue without precondition, so that the citizens of Kosovo may enjoy a sufficient degree of autonomy with meaningful self-administration, as well as complete respect for their human rights within the border of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Japan is of the view that the participation of an outside representative or representatives will be important in order to ensure that such a dialogue can be promoted in a meaningful way.

The Government of Japan fully supports the efforts of the relevant international organizations and other bodies, especially the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Contact Group, in their cooperation for the resolution of the crisis in Kosovo. My Government urges the authorities in Belgrade to fully cooperate with the OSCE and to take steps to implement without delay the actions set out in the statement of the Contact Group of 9 March 1998. While my delegation recognizes that some positive steps have been taken by the authorities in Belgrade during the past few weeks, such as the declaration of 18 March by the President of the Republic of Serbia and the signature on 23 March of an agreement to implement the 1996 Education Agreement, further progress must be made without delay by the authorities of both the Republic of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At the same time, the Government of Japan calls upon all elements of the Albanian community in Kosovo to immediately accept the dialogue and to categorically denounce terrorist activities and external support for such activities.

For these reasons, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution now before us, which sets out in a balanced manner all these points that I have emphasized as important.

I should like to close my statement by expressing the readiness of the Government of Japan to actively participate in the efforts of the Security Council and of the international community as a whole to assist in the peaceful resolution of the crisis in Kosovo.

Mr. Sáenz Biolley (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In recent days we have witnessed, with deep concern, extremely serious human rights violations in Kosovo, which have led to the death of dozens of people and deprived the inhabitants of the area of their basic security. The increased violence in Kosovo has become manifest in a variety of ways. On the one hand, the Serbian police forces have used excessive and unjustifiable force against peaceful demonstrators, and on the other, acts of violence and reprehensible terrorist attacks have been perpetrated. Those acts, in the context of the very sensitive political and security balance in the Balkans, constitute a clear threat to international peace and security, which obligates the Council to take firm and decisive action.

Respect for human rights constitutes a fundamental value of the international community. As has been pointed out by the International Court of Justice, their violation is an offense against humankind as a whole. Thus Costa Rica has always maintained that safeguarding human rights is not solely and exclusively a matter of the internal jurisdiction of States. On the contrary, Costa Rica believes that respect for human rights, and the violation of such rights, are matters of the utmost interest to the international community.

In this connection, we believe that there are certain circumstances in which a violation of such fundamental rights is so serious that it constitutes, in and of itself, a threat to international peace and security and therefore fully justifies the Security Council's invoking the powers granted to it under Chapter VII of the Charter.

We condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Our position and actions, in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, leave no room for doubt on this score. However, combating terrorism does not, as we see it, in any way justify human rights violations or the failure to respect international humanitarian law.

Thus the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must, in the specific case of Kosovo, respect the human rights of all of its inhabitants, regardless of their ethnic origin or political views. Likewise, it is imperative that it not allow the recurrence of any excessive and unjustified acts of violence by its police forces, that it prosecute the accused and that it fully cooperate with the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

It is essential to begin a constructive dialogue with the leaders of the Kosovar Albanian community in order to resolve the political situation and allow for an appropriate degree of autonomy. The authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia must also allow humanitarian organizations full access to the Kosovo region and facilitate a mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. These measures must be applied as soon as possible. If the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia failed to do so and continued to violate the fundamental rights of the population, we would be obligated to consider the imposition of additional measures in order to compel them to change their illegal policies that are contrary to the principles and obligations set forth in the Charter.

Finally, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us. We believe that imposing a prohibition on the sale or supply of arms and other military equipment to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is the minimal response the Security Council can provide at this time.

Mr. Dejammet (France)(*interpretation from French*): The situation in Kosovo in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia calls for a response from the Security Council. The tragic events that have marked the former Yugoslavia in recent years have indeed demonstrated the need for a rapid and appropriate response to crisis situations in the region.

The States that make up what has been called the Contact Group, as well as the European Union, the 26 countries that participated in the European conference held in London and the neighbouring Balkan States, have been involved since the beginning of the crisis. They have emphasized the need for a cessation of violence and the withdrawal of the special police forces, their condemnation of terrorism and the importance of achieving a political solution to the Kosovo crisis through dialogue and with respect for the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. That solution should include substantially greater autonomy for Kosovo.

During the London Contact Group meeting, on 9 March 1998, specific requirements were defined, deadlines were set and measures for immediate implementation were decided on. Meeting again on 25 March at Bonn, the States of the Contact Group noted that progress had been achieved since the London meeting.

The joint visit of the German and French Foreign Ministers to Belgrade on 19 March made it possible to appreciate positive developments in the position of the authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The agreement reached on 23 March between the parties regarding measures to implement the 1996 Education Agreement also demonstrates that it is possible to achieve a negotiated solution to delicate issues.

That progress, however important, is still not enough. Additional steps must be taken by the Belgrade authorities and the representatives of the Kosovar Albanians in order for substantive dialogue to commence without preconditions.

The draft resolution before the Security Council today is part of this context. By this draft resolution, the Security Council would decide on an embargo on the sale or supply of arms to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo. France already supports such a measure, in accordance with the embargo decided on by the European Union in 1991 and reconfirmed on 19 March 1998.

The measures stipulated in the draft resolution should first and foremost be seen as a means to achieve a negotiated settlement of the current crisis. The text provides that the Security Council will review the

prohibitions that have been decided on and will be able to lift them as soon as the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has met the conditions set out in the draft resolution. The prohibitions can thus be lifted when the Secretary-General, in one of the periodic reports he must submit to the Security Council every 30 days, deems that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has fulfilled the specific requirements set by the Security Council.

The draft resolution also provides that specific progress on certain difficult issues related to Kosovo will make it possible for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to improve its prospects for normalizing its international relations and for full participation in international institutions.

My country therefore considers this draft resolution to be a balanced text that can contribute to a peaceful political settlement of the current crisis in Kosovo. That is why France will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Amolo (Kenya): The Kenya delegation wishes to express its support for the draft resolution which is before us today. We express grave concern about the recent violent developments in Kosovo, and while appreciating that there has been some progress in implementing the actions outlined in the Contact Group statement of 9 March 1998, a lot more dedicated work is required. The Kenya delegation therefore calls upon the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and other parties to move expeditiously to achieve a political solution to the issue of Kosovo through dialogue. We also call upon the Kosovar Albanian leadership to condemn all terrorist action and urge them to pursue their political, social and economic goals by peaceful means only.

We believe that the proliferation of arms and related *matériel* has exacerbated the already tense political and security situation and believe that an arms embargo will assist in fostering peace and stability in Kosovo. We therefore call upon all States to strictly observe this embargo. The draft resolution before us has a clear mechanism for lifting this embargo, and we hope that the clearly laid out conditions to enable this to happen will be met sooner rather than later.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): The situation in Kosovo remains serious and clearly constitutes a threat to international peace and security. We are pleased to see the Council today discharging its duty in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations in an effort to prevent a flare-up of new armed violence in the Balkans. We will therefore welcome the adoption of the draft resolution before us, imposing an arms embargo on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo. For Sweden, peace and stability in the Balkans are necessary prerequisites for European security.

We condemn the excessive use of force by the Serbian special police in Kosovo, which has caused several deaths and injuries to unarmed civilians. We also condemn all acts of terrorism. Both sides must exercise restraint and enter into a serious political dialogue on how to settle their differences through exclusively peaceful means and on the basis of human rights and the rule of law.

Sweden fully supports the declarations made by the Contact Group ministers on 9 and 25 March in response to the developments in Kosovo. We agree with the measures recommended in order to persuade the authorities in Belgrade to take necessary steps towards an acceptable solution. It is also incumbent upon the Kosovar Albanian leadership to act responsibly and facilitate the beginning of a constructive dialogue.

While Belgrade has recently taken some positive steps, much remains to be done. The concrete steps the authorities in Belgrade must take are clearly spelt out in paragraph 16 of the draft resolution. These steps include, first, initiating a substantive dialogue on Kosovo with the participation of an outside representative or representatives; secondly, withdrawal of the special police; thirdly, allowing access to Kosovo by humanitarian organizations and others; fourthly, accepting a mission by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union representative, Mr. Felipe González, as well as the return of the OSCE long-term missions; and, fifthly, facilitating a mission to Kosovo by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Hopefully, Belgrade will listen to the international community and take these steps, which would enable the Council to reconsider the sanctions. Together with progress in resolving human rights issues and in cooperating with the International Tribunal, this would also enhance the prospects for the normalization of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's international relations, which we look forward to. If Belgrade does not comply, however, additional measures will be considered.

The arms embargo that we are about to impose must be immediately and strictly implemented by all States. As a member of the European Union, Sweden has already decided to implement not only the arms embargo but also the other sanctions recommended by the Contact Group, including refusal to supply equipment which can be used for internal repression or for terrorism, denial of visas for officials responsible for the repression and a moratorium on Government-financed export credits.

Finally, let me say that Sweden concurs with the statement that the United Kingdom is going to make on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): Given the tragic background of inter-ethnic violence in the recent history of the Balkans, the international community has not been unjustified in reacting with disquiet to the recent events in the Kosovo region of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. I do not wish to minimize the complex threats to internal security posed by clandestine terrorist activity, but the fact remains that the repressive measures taken against civilians in Kosovo by Serbian police forces have provoked indignation throughout the world.

Significantly, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of South-Eastern Europe, meeting in Sofia on March 10, circulated a declaration expressing their

> "concern with the deteriorating situation in Kosovo and with the grave consequences of an inter-ethnic conflict and its possible spillover in the region."

In addition to the Sofia meeting, there have been a number of important encounters and declarations dealing with these new episodes of Balkan instability, which have all seemed to converge towards the need for the international community to avoid the mistakes of the past by articulating a quick and effective response which will help stem the violence and create the conditions for improved dialogue and cooperation between the parties.

We have welcomed the many joint and individual diplomatic initiatives taken by those who would be potentially most affected by a new wave of unrest in the Balkans, and have remained attentive to their strategies for dealing with what might best be described as a very delicate situation. It is from this intense diplomatic mobilization that a decision has seemed to emerge in favour of an arms embargo, as a measure capable of putting pressure on the parties to negotiate while placing a limit on the presence of weapons in an already heavily armed and volatile region.

As a matter of principle, it has seemed important for my delegation to emphasize the need for clear provisions regarding the conditions for lifting the sanctions in the draft before us. We note that paragraph 16 addresses this problem in a manner which we consider satisfactory, although we would stress the need for the Secretary-General to base the assessments he is to make under that paragraph on as wide a spectrum of information as possible, and in close cooperation with the region, the countries which meet as the Contact Group — France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States — the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union.

While concurring with the imposition of an embargo, we cannot fail to stress that these measures will not yield the desired effect if they are not accompanied by parallel diplomatic efforts aimed at the promotion of a safer and more harmonious environment for those who have been most directly affected by the unrest.

Furthermore, if there is movement in a positive direction, the Security Council should acknowledge it promptly. The declaration by the President of the Republic of Serbia on the political process in Kosovo has been received by the international community as an auspicious sign. In the face of further and sustained progress, there should be no reason to doubt that the Security Council will respond accordingly. At this stage we should confine ourselves to the measures contained in the draft, in the expectation that developments will render needless the consideration of additional restrictions.

Although the Charter enshrines the principle of non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, we are all aware that this principle does not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 7. Perhaps it is not by coincidence that the proliferation of decisions authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VII since the end of the cold war, and of sanctions in particular, has come about in a world where conflict has often seemed to break out within the internal borders of States. Some observers have gone as far as to suggest that there may have been a tendency to frame emergencies under Chapter VII in recent years so as to circumvent the non-intervention principle. If this were indeed the case, we

would be witnessing a distortion in the waiver provided by Article 2, paragraph 7, which would seem to be incompatible with its original purpose.

On the other hand, as stated in General Assembly resolution 51/242, annex II, on the question of sanctions imposed by the United Nations, sanctions are a matter of the utmost seriousness and concern. That text, adopted by consensus, declares in paragraph 1 that

> "Sanctions should be resorted to only with the utmost caution, when other peaceful options provided by the Charter are inadequate."

By concluding my statement with these references to an important General Assembly resolution and to the United Nations Charter, I wish to emphasize my delegation's commitment to the pacific settlement of disputes within a context of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. We believe that by exercising caution in resorting to coercive measures we are actually strengthening the authority of the Security Council in the face of serious and otherwise intractable situations.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): The Security Council is opening a new and potentially important chapter in its effort to maintain peace and security in the Balkans. The situation in Kosovo in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has the potential for serious destabilization in the region. On the other hand, if managed towards a genuine political solution it could represent an important building block in the structure of security and political stability in the Balkans. Today both options are open, and the future depends not only on the action of those directly involved but also on the international community as a whole, including the Security Council. The accuracy of political analysis and assessment and the correct choice of the first steps are of critical importance.

There are, in our opinion, three essential political lessons, based upon recent experience and common sense, which need to be borne in mind while approaching the issue of Kosovo.

First, there is no reason to expect quick fixes. The situation is difficult and the capacities for a quick political settlement limited. Kosovo is one of those places where history has cast some of its longest and darkest shadows. Too much violence and too little readiness for genuine compromise have characterized the situation for years.

However, it would be wrong to conclude that violence will be inevitable in the future. Much will depend on the ability of the international actors to guide future developments towards genuine political solutions. These solutions will have to include arrangements that will satisfy the needs of both the Albanian majority population and the Serb population in Kosovo. While the path to success could be long and exhausting, it is important that the right steps be taken from the beginning.

Secondly, the principles upon which the solutions are sought should be sufficiently broad and sufficiently fundamental. It is essential that the political process be started on the basis of broad and fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. These principles include everything that is essential. Moreover, they are not constrained by the specificities that are meant for other types of situations and that characterize some of the more recent international instruments.

Let me give an example. A range of recent instruments on the rights of persons belonging to various kinds of minorities does not seem particularly useful in the process of searching for a potential political solution for Kosovo, except, of course, to the extent that the parties directly involved recognize them as useful. Let us not forget that not long ago Kosovo enjoyed a degree of autonomy that far exceeded the limits set out in some recent instruments on the rights of minorities — that is, instruments that were developed for situations different from and easier than that of Kosovo.

Thirdly, it is essential to ensure that intellectual and moral accuracy prevail in the international efforts to help resolve the situation. It is extremely important that the problems at hand are defined accurately and honestly. The degree to which the issues are used for other political reasons besides the search for solutions needs to be conscientiously reduced to the minimum.

In the past, the unilateral dismantling of Kosovo's autonomy represented one of the major sources of political deterioration and instability in the region. At present, the use of force against the Albanians of Kosovo represents the most important source of instability and a threat to international peace and security. Consequently, efforts must be directed towards the elimination of that threat. The attempts to obscure that threat by various techniques of what commentators call "an even distribution of guilt" — techniques that were amply on

display in international discussions on some other situations in the recent past — would again bring only harm and suffering and would delay the solutions. The techniques of "an even distribution of guilt" say little about the actual facts of the situation concerned and speak volumes about the lack of agreement at the level of the international community. What is needed is the clear identification of facts and a responsible judgement regarding their consequences.

In this context, I wish to refer to a specific question that requires attention at this stage, namely, the issue of terrorism and the danger of political misuse of the word "terrorism". There is a clear need to avoid the trap set by those who use the label of terrorism for reasons of political convenience and without proper factual foundation.

It is clear that violent acts, such as the taking of hostages, attacks against the safety of civilian air traffic, terrorist bombings and other attacks against civilian targets are properly defined as terrorism. And it is clear that terrorism has to be condemned and combated.

On the other hand, however, there are forms of struggle that, albeit undesirable, are not terrorism and ought not to be labelled as such. This is particularly relevant to the situation in Kosovo, where the characteristics of an armed conflict have, unfortunately, already assumed serious proportions.

Permit me now to make a few observations on the text of the draft resolution submitted to the Security Council for action today.

The situation in Kosovo has been giving rise to legitimate international concern for quite some time now. Thus, it can no longer be described as an internal affair. Serious violations of human rights have been reported for years, and the use of force in recent weeks has triggered a wave of expressions of concern from the neighbouring States and the international community at large.

Slovenia shares the concern expressed at the meetings of the Contact Group in London on 9 March 1998 and in Bonn on 25 March 1998. Moreover, we generally agree with the decisions taken at those meetings, including the decisions regarding action by the Security Council. Such action is necessary since the situation in Kosovo has already developed into a threat to international peace and security in the region. This is the reason for action based on Chapter VII of the Charter, as envisaged in the draft resolution.

Slovenia supports the draft resolution as proposed by the sponsors and will vote in favour of it. The draft resolution contains important elements, including the prevention of the flow of arms to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The draft resolution represents an additional piece in the mosaic of international pressure on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to start immediately and without conditions serious negotiations on the final status of Kosovo. The draft resolution should demonstrate the determination of the international community that this is the time to act and to prevent a massive humanitarian tragedy and the outbreak of war.

The draft resolution condemns the recent violence in Kosovo, which resulted in numerous fatalities among innocent civilians.

The draft resolution calls upon both sides — namely, the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the leadership of the Kosovar Albanians to enter without preconditions into a meaningful dialogue on an enhanced status for Kosovo, which would include a substantially greater degree of autonomy and meaningful self-administration.

The draft resolution imposes an embargo on the sale and supply to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — including, but not only, Kosovo — of arms and related *matériel* of all types. It provides clear conditions for the lifting of the embargo, as well as additional measures in case of failure to make constructive progress towards a peaceful resolution.

The draft resolution also notes that possible concrete progress to resolve the crisis in Kosovo could improve the prospects for participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international institutions. It goes without saying that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia could participate in the work of those institutions only in accordance with the rules and decisions of those institutions, including the ones applicable to new members. It should be recalled that the current non-participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international institutions is largely a consequence of its unwillingness to apply for membership.

A solution to the Kosovo crisis can be found only by the parties themselves — but not by themselves alone. The animosities between them and tensions in the broader region are already too high. The international community should help the parties by applying pressure and by providing mediation during the forthcoming negotiations.

The efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office are supported also by the Security Council in this draft resolution.

The success of the draft resolution submitted for action today should be assessed on how it will, together with other measures and actions by other international and regional institutions, succeed in leading to serious progress in negotiations on the final status of Kosovo; deterring the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from using force again in Kosovo and encouraging it, rather, to make use of peaceful means to solve the problems; and giving the Albanians much-needed confidence in the efforts of the international community.

The present draft resolution can be a step in the right direction. The Security Council should very soon be ready to evaluate its real effects and those of the specific measures envisaged in it. It is known from recent experience that the political message of an arms embargo may not be properly understood and that the application of the embargo may leave much to be desired. Therefore, the Security Council should remain actively seized of the matter in an effort to help resolve the situation and to maintain peace and security in the region.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation wishes at the outset to convey its appreciation of the efforts made by the sponsors of today's draft resolution on Kosovo. We would have preferred the concerns we expressed during consultations to have been taken into account. Yet, in a spirit of cooperation, my delegation did not wish to obstruct the work of the Council or to stand in the way of unanimity, even though we believe that those concerns are legitimate.

Recently the Kosovo region has been the scene of bloody violence against the Albanian community, which constitutes more than 90 per cent of the population there. This violence has resulted in the death of many innocent people, including children and women. We feel great sadness and sorrow for these victims and condemn the savagery with which this matter has been handled. We also condemn the practices of the Serbian authorities against unarmed civilian inhabitants of the Kosovo region, the arbitrary measures and the discriminatory practices employed against them, including imprisonment.

There have been substantial international and regional attempts to urge the Serbian Government to act with restraint and to begin a serious, unconditional political dialogue with the Kosovar Albanians. In this regard, the Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia have exerted strenuous efforts to resolve this crisis. Some of the Contact Group Foreign Ministers visited Belgrade seeking to convince the Government there to settle the crisis peacefully. But the Belgrade Government has persisted in rejecting all these attempts and has persevered in its intransigence.

With a view to preventing another massacre, like that which took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Security Council acted swiftly; several consultation meetings and other contacts took place, resulting in the draft resolution before us today, which we hope will send a clear message from the international community to the authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the context of attempts to settle the problem, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, at the twenty-fifth meeting of Foreign Ministers that took place at Doha, Qatar, from 15 to 17 March 1998, expressed its concern at the grave violations of the human and political rights of the inhabitants of the Kosovo region. The Organization of the Islamic Conference emphasized its rejection of the arbitrary use of armed force against civilians in Kosovo. It also called for an immediate halt to such actions and for an immediate withdrawal from civilian areas. The Organization of the Islamic Conference also adopted a resolution calling upon its Secretary-General to hold consultations with other relevant international organizations with a view to managing the Kosovo crisis. It also called for the establishment of genuine institutions in Kosovo, as the best way of protecting the human, political and national rights of the population of the region, and of preventing the escalation of violence there. It further called for the reopening of all educational, cultural and scientific institutions, and for internationally protected dialogue with the Kosovo population.

The draft resolution before the Council today is but an initial message to the Belgrade Government. We hope that that Government will reconsider all its actions and past policies with respect to the Kosovo region. We hope that that Government will respond positively to the call of the international community, which in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution before us would clearly call for offering the Kosovar Albanian community a genuine political process; we hope that this will lead to a settlement acceptable to both sides.

The Government of Bahrain supports draft resolution S/1998/284 and will vote in favour of it.

Mr. Soares (Portugal): Our deep concern at the situation in Kosovo cannot be overstated. Not only are issues of political and human rights at stake, but instability in Kosovo also threatens international peace and security in the region. The international community should send an unambiguous signal of its concern and should unite in its efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution on Kosovo.

We therefore fully support the role assumed by the Contact Group in defining an action plan to end the violence in Kosovo and to bring about a political solution through unconditional dialogue, as set out in the statements issued by Contact Group Foreign Ministers at London on 9 March and at Bonn on 25 March. Consequently, we strongly support the draft resolution before the Council today, which would establish an arms embargo on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The goal of the draft resolution is clear: to end the violence both by the security forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and by terrorists, and to promote a meaningful process of unconditional dialogue with the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community.

This unconditional dialogue should be oriented towards giving Kosovo a substantially greater degree of autonomy, including meaningful self-administration. The outcome of the dialogue should not be predetermined, and it should be based on the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as on the principles of the Helsinki Final Act adopted by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and of the United Nations Charter.

Let us be clear: we support neither independence nor the status quo. We call on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovar Albanian community to renounce violence and to pursue this dialogue and reach a mutually acceptable agreement. We utterly condemn the use of force by either side.

An important step towards a process of dialogue has been the agreement on measures to implement the 1996 Education Agreement. We urge that this be followed through effectively.

The role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in bringing about an acceptable resolution on Kosovo is equally important, and we urge the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to cooperate fully with the Personal Representative of Chairman-in-Office of OSCE and Special Representative of the European Union, Mr. Felipe Gonzalez, and to allow the return of the long-term OSCE mission.

We hope that the arms embargo the Council is establishing today will not be in place for long. It is in the best interests of all concerned that swift measures be taken to initiate the peaceful dialogue to which I have referred. We trust that this opportunity will be seized.

In conclusion, I wish also to say that as a member of the European Union, Portugal's position on the matter before the Council today is fully reflected in the statement to be made by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Fedotov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): From the very outset, the Russian Federation has viewed the recent events in Kosovo as the internal affair of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We strongly believe that the basic principle for a settlement of the situation in Kosovo is that that autonomous region must remain within Serbia on the basis of unswerving compliance with the principle of the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of the republics that make it up.

Only within this legal framework is an effective settlement of the Kosovo problem possible through peaceful political dialogue without preconditions or unilateral approaches. It is precisely in support of such a political process that the decisions of the international Contact Group, adopted at London and Bonn, are directed.

While we condemn the use of excessive force by the Serbian police, we also strongly condemn any terrorist acts on the part of the Kosovar Albanians, including the so-called the Kosovo Liberation Army, and other manifestations of extremism, which seriously destabilize the situation and complicate the search for a mutually acceptable and effective political settlement of the situation. This approach is based on a key principle of Russian foreign policy: Terrorism is categorically unacceptable in any form or manifestation and calls for the most decisive condemnation of the international community. Clearly, any foreign support for terrorism must be nipped in the bud, which requires a coordinated international effort.

Unfortunately, the events in Kosovo have an adverse regional impact. At the same time, the situation in Kosovo, despite its complexity, does not constitute a threat to regional, much less international peace and security. It is precisely this understanding that is reflected in the draft resolution before us today.

It was extremely difficult for Russia to agree with such a measure as the introduction of a military embargo. We embarked on this step only on the understanding — which is now embedded in the draft resolution — that the issue is not about punishing anyone, Belgrade in particular, but about specific measures designed to prevent an increase in tensions, to erect an obstacle to external terrorism, and to foster the political process with a view to a speedy and lasting settlement. The prospects for such a settlement depend on the political will and willingness to take a constructive approach of both sides — the Serbian leadership of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovar Albanians.

One of the most important conditions for the viability of the embargo is an effective monitoring regime for its implementation, particularly on the Albanian-Macedonian border. The illegal arms traffic must be reliably impeded and mere declarations on that subject do not suffice. It is precisely from this perspective that we must consider the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force. It may be useful in this context for the Secretary-General, in preparing the reports contemplated in the draft resolution, to conduct investigations on the supply of weapons, training, and financial and other support for the Kosovo terrorists from the territories of neighbouring and other countries.

Russia's position has been and continues to be that the Security Council's establishment of a military embargo, like any military sanctions, is possible only with a clear exit strategy. In the future, we will continue to advocate the need to limit the sanctions with a clear schedule, following the expiration of which the Council will have to decide whether or not the sanctions should be extended.

Unfortunately, our approach has not, for the time being, received sufficient support in the Security Council. Nevertheless, the draft resolution has been able to define strict criteria; if Belgrade complies with these, the Security Council will decide to lift the embargo. We note that the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia have already taken important steps in that direction. They have announced the withdrawal of police units; the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations have been given access to Kosovo; the President of Serbia, Mr. Milutinović, officially announced his readiness for a political dialogue with the Kosovar Albanians, without preconditions. We encourage Belgrade to intensify these positive efforts.

As the draft resolution confirms, concrete progress to resolve the issues relating to the situation in Kosovo will improve the international position of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and prospects for normalization of its full participation in international institutions. Russia sincerely hopes that this will happen as soon as possible.

It is also important that the draft resolution clearly links the restrictions it imposes to existing agreements in the region on the levels of armaments, *inter alia*, the Florence Agreement on Subregional Arms Control.

We see the main task of the international community to be the full promotion of the consolidation of progress made in the situation around Kosovo. This must not be done by increasing sanction measures, which may have the most adverse repercussions for the entire Balkan region and many other States besides. The efforts of all interested countries and international organizations must be directed to encouraging and supporting the political process, fostering dialogue to the greatest extent possible, and preventing any deterioration of the situation. Russia will continue to work precisely to that end.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation is concerned about the current situation in Kosovo, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Kosovo is an integral part of the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The question of Kosovo is, in its essence, an internal matter of the Federal Republic. It should be resolved properly through negotiations between both parties concerned on the basis of the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

We have noted that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has taken a series of positive measures in this regard and that the situation on the ground is moving towards stability. We do not think that the situation in Kosovo endangers regional and international peace and security.

Ethnic issues are extremely complicated and sensitive, especially in the Balkans. On the one hand, the legitimate rights and interests of all ethnic groups should

be protected; on the other, secessionist activities by various extremist elements should be prevented.

Many countries in the region are multiethnic. If the Council is to get involved in a dispute without a request from the country concerned, it may set a bad precedent and have wider negative implications. Therefore, the Council should be cautious when addressing these issues.

The priority issue in solving the question of Kosovo in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is for the parties to start the political talks as soon as possible. However, the draft resolution before us would not help move the parties to negotiations. Furthermore, it is neither appropriate to bring before the Council the differences between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as the human rights issues in Kosovo, nor proper to link the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's return to the international community with the question of Kosovo.

The Chinese delegation has stated its principled position repeatedly in the Council's consultations. Since the contents of the draft resolution do not conform to our principled position, we have no choice but to abstain in the voting. The Chinese delegation requests that its position be placed on record.

The President: I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1998/284.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bahrain, Brazil, Costa Rica, France, Gabon, Gambia, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstaining:

China

The President: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1160 (1998).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Richmond (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom shares the deep concern expressed around this table about the violence and bloodshed which, in recent weeks, have once again visited this troubled part of the world. The resolution which the Council has adopted today is one element in a concerted international effort to prevent a repetition in Kosovo of the cycle of violence we have already seen elsewhere in the region.

On 9 March the United Kingdom hosted a meeting of Foreign Ministers of Contact Group countries in London. The Group agreed a plan of action aimed at putting a stop to further violence and paving the way for a serious political dialogue between the authorities in Belgrade and representatives of the Kosovar Albanian community.

Meeting again in Bonn on 25 March, the Contact Group concluded that while there had been some progress in the intervening period, included the belated agreement to implement the 1996 Education Agreement, the steps taken by the Belgrade authorities towards meeting the requirements set out in London did not go far enough.

In adopting this resolution, the Security Council sends an unmistakable message: that by acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council considers that the situation in Kosovo constitutes a threat to international peace and security in the Balkans region. It says to Belgrade that repression in Kosovo will not be tolerated by the international community; and to the Kosovar side, it says that terrorism — in whatever guise and for whatever purpose — is unacceptable.

The United Kingdom's record against terrorism is firm. But terrorism cannot be a pretext for the use of force against a civilian population. Belgrade cannot pass off the repressive acts of recent weeks as purely an internal affair. Human rights abuses are a matter for us all. And we have a particular responsibility to reduce tension in the region before it causes instability in neighbouring countries.

The United Kingdom does not support separatism or independence in Kosovo. But we expect Belgrade to grant Kosovo an enhanced status including self-administration. Getting the authorities in Belgrade and the Kosovar Albanian community to start a constructive dialogue without preconditions about the differences between them is the only chance of reaching a peaceful settlement. Repressive police actions of the kind we have witnessed

in recent weeks serve merely to undermine the moderates on both sides and to increase support for terrorists.

The United Kingdom looks forward to the day when we can welcome the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the family of democratic nations of Europe. But we cannot do so while Belgrade fails to meet the standards that the rest of Europe has set itself. President Milosevic has a choice: he must decide whether he wishes to consign the future of his State and its people to further isolation and mounting international pressure, or whether he wants to see progress in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's relations with the European Union and the rest of the international community of the kind already being made by its neighbours.

Mr. Richardson (United States of America): Today the Security Council is taking a clear stand for peace and security in the Balkans. The United States strongly supports this resolution imposing an arms embargo on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In so doing, the Council sends an unambiguous message that the international community will not tolerate violence and "ethnic cleansing" in the region of the former Yugoslavia. We must avoid the mistakes of the past, when the international community waited too long before taking decisive action. We fully recognize that the security of the region directly affects broader international interests and that deterioration of the situation in Kosovo constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Over the last few years, this Council and the international community have worked hard to promote ethnic reconciliation in Bosnia and Croatia. The United States and our partners in the peace effort must not now watch years of peace-building in the Balkans destroyed by repressive violence or by terrorist activity in Kosovo.

The Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group, meeting in London on March 9 and in Bonn on March 25, agreed that the situation in Kosovo is not simply an internal matter, but also has a direct impact on the stability of neighbouring countries and jeopardizes peace in the Balkans. As Secretary Albright said in Bonn, the international community has not faced a problem in the former Yugoslavia as dangerous as the situation in Kosovo since the last war in the region began.

President Milosevic knows what he must do to have the arms embargo and other sanctions lifted and to avoid further measures. As a necessary and crucial step, President Milosevic must begin an unconditional dialogue on political status issues with the Kosovar Albanian leadership. The United States joins the Council in expressing support for an enhanced status for Kosovo, including greater autonomy and meaningful self-administration. The United States believes this is the only way to achieve long-term peace and a satisfactory resolution to the conflict in the region.

The United States strongly welcomes the clear commitment of Mr. Rugova and other senior representatives of the Kosovar Albanian leadership to non-violence and a negotiated solution to the crisis in Kosovo. We will not countenance terrorist activity or external support for terrorist activity. The Kosovar Albanian community should pursue their goals through peaceful means.

This resolution also underlines the important role of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal in gathering evidence about the violence in Kosovo which may fall within its jurisdiction. We remind the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of their obligation to extend full cooperation in this effort, as well as of their commitments under the Bosnia peace agreement to cooperate fully with the International Tribunal.

Of key importance is urgent action by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to stop the violence and other provocative action by its police and paramilitary security forces. In spite of assurances by the authorities to the contrary, these special police remain in Kosovo in force. They must be withdrawn immediately, in keeping with the London Contact Group statement. Civilians and members of the international community, including international humanitarian workers in the region, have been harassed, threatened, arrested and even beaten by these police.

We believe that only sustained international pressure will ensure continued progress towards the goal of a peacefully negotiated solution in Kosovo. This resolution confirms that the international community will hold President Milosević firmly to meeting in full the benchmarks of the London Contact Group. Otherwise, as the Bonn Contact Group recognized, additional measures may be needed.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Gambia.

The recent events in Kosovo, Serbia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have been a great concern the world over. These events prompted the Security Council

some weeks ago to request its President to make a statement to the press expressing serious concern over the situation in Kosovo and calling on the parties to exercise utmost restraint and to enter into serious political dialogue. The situation in Kosovo did not witness any concrete progress after that statement was made.

Although progress has been made in the implementation of the actions indicated by the Contact Group in its statement of 9 March 1998, my delegation believes that there is still more to be done, as the situation still remains precarious.

In this context, my delegation welcomes and supports the signature on 23 March 1998 of the 1996 Education Agreement. It is imperative that this Agreement be implemented fully and in accordance with the agreed timetable.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to thank the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Contact Group for their relentless efforts to bring about a solution to the problem in Kosovo. We therefore urge them to continue the good work.

The Contact Group is offering a diplomatic and political opportunity for the solution of the problems in Kosovo. The parties should give diplomacy a chance and take advantage of the window of opportunity opened for them by the OSCE.

It is my delegation's belief that the situation there cannot be settled without meaningful dialogue between the parties to resolve their differences. Resort to the use of force, unprovoked violence and terrorism are no answer to their problems. Political problems should be solved politically. The use of force, more often than not, further exacerbates a problem and produces compliance based on a fragile foundation. My delegation therefore calls on the parties to exercise utmost restraint and work out measures to find a political solution to this problem.

My delegation notes with appreciation the claimed commitment of the senior representatives of the Kosovar Albanian community to non-violence. My delegation hopes that the same can be said of the Serbian Government.

However, the availability of arms and other military *matériel* to parties in a conflict usually leads the parties to armed confrontation. It is noted with disapproval that such is the case in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. My delegation would therefore support the measures contained in the resolution. It is our view that the lack of access by the parties to military *matériel* would reduce their capability to fight and, hence, the incidence of violence. In that context, my delegation welcomes the establishment of a Committee to monitor the implementation of the measures contained in the resolution and urges all States to respect them.

While the Council considers an arms embargo on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, to be a necessary step to halt the continued degeneration of the situation in Kosovo, this move alone is not sufficient to change the situation. The parties to the conflict should be genuinely committed to working out a diplomatic solution. My delegation recognizes that the prospects for such an achievement could be elusive if a genuine political process acceptable to both sides is not put in place.

Finally, my delegation wishes once more to urge the parties to find a political compromise and also to respect the provisions of the resolution we have adopted today. In this way, what may appear to be an insurmountable problem would in fact turn out to be the opposite.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Richmond (United Kingdom): I would like to make a statement on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania — as well as the European Free Trade Association country, Norway, a member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is deeply concerned at the threat to regional peace and security posed by the situation in Kosovo. The international community must send a clear message to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Serbian authorities that the excessive violence by military police units, involving deaths and injury among the civilian population, is unacceptable. Equally, we condemn unreservedly all terrorist acts and call on those supplying financial support, arms or training to cease to do so. We urge both sides to engage immediately in genuine and unconditional dialogue, including with the participation of an outside representative.

The European Union fully supports the statement made by the Contact Group Foreign Ministers in Bonn on 25 March. It endorses their assessment that while some positive developments have occurred — notably the deal on the implementation of the Education Agreement, which is a particularly welcome step forward — progress has not been sufficient to meet the requirements set out by the meeting of Contact Group Foreign Ministers in London on 9 March.

The European Union has nominated Mr. Felipe González as European Union Special Representative, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the European Union's contribution to resolving the problems in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, and the European Union strongly supports the mission by Mr. González as Personal Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Chairman-in-Office for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The European Union believes that pressure must be maintained to bring the Belgrade authorities to the negotiating table. That means implementing forthwith the measures agreed at the London Contact Group meeting.

Against this background, the European Union strongly supports the resolution which has just been adopted by the Council. The Union already has a comprehensive arms embargo in place against the countries of the former Yugoslavia. We wish to see all other Member States taking an equally stringent position. This resolution is an expression of the international community's rejection of the policy of violence, whether carried out by military police or by terrorists.

It is essential also that the international response to the crisis be a united and coherent one. We know, to our cost, from the early days of the Bosnian war, that international divisions undermine our efforts. The resolution we have adopted today sends a powerful signal to the authorities in Belgrade that the international community is united in its desire to see real progress on Kosovo and is monitoring events there closely. Neighbouring States have already expressed concern that further turmoil in Kosovo might spread instability beyond the borders of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We owe it to them to take a firm line.

The European Union favours granting a large degree of autonomy to Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This must include meaningful self-administration for the local population. But the key is getting both sides to talk, and we will support a settlement on Kosovo's status reached by mutual agreement.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken earlier in the meeting, I now invite Mr. Jovanović to take a seat at the Council table and to make a statement.

Mr. Jovanović: At the very outset, let me eliminate every risk of perceptive mistakes: Kosovo and Metohija is a Serbian province that has always been, and is today, an integral part of the Republic of Serbia. That territory has never been part of any other State. It is the cradle of the Serbian State, one of the oldest European States, the birthplace of Serbian culture and civilization.

Besides the Serbs and Montenegrins, and besides the members of the Albanian national minority, members of other national minorities and ethnic communities — such as Muslims, numbering over 150,000; Romanies, numbering 150,000; Turks, Croats and others — have for centuries also lived in Kosovo and Metohija.

Under the constitution and laws, all of them are granted the same civil and human rights: to their language, culture, media and religion; to elect and to be elected; and to participate in genuine political processes, from self-rule to republican and federal parliaments. All these rights are based on the highest European standards, including the standards of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe Framework Convention.

The members of the Albanian national minority are granted the same rights that are granted to other citizens. However, whereas all other citizens exercise their rights, a large part of the Albanian national minority boycott some of those rights — under pressure from and because of blackmail by their separatist representatives — and exercise others. For instance, they boycott municipal and local elections, the official census and political institutions, yet they are very active in exercising the right to private property, pensions and social benefits and the right to employment, passports, freedom of movement and private enterprise. The exercise of the right to information, for instance, is attested to by the fact that over 50 private dailies, weeklies and periodicals are printed in the Albanian language, the aggregate circulation of which amounts to 2.5 million copies.

The selective boycott of some, and the exercise of other, rights is not the result of the free will of the members of the Albanian national minority, most of whom are responsible, loyal and law-abiding citizens. It is the result of pressure and blackmail by some leaders of the political parties in Kosovo and Metohija whose public programme is secession from Serbia. Terrorist actions, the killing of Albanians loyal to Serbia, the assassination of public officials, attacks on public institutions and the ambushing of police officers such as took place on 28 February 1998, when four policemen were killed, are designed to intimidate ethnic Albanians into closing ranks, increase tension, attract the attention of the international public and "substantiate" the requests for mediation and internationalization. The ultimate goal is the secession of this Serbian land from Serbia. Simply put, Serbia cannot and will not allow that to happen under any conditions.

I trust and believe that it is apparent that the problems in Kosovo and Metohija are rooted in a separatism which, at this very moment, is publicly advocated by the representatives of some political parties of the Albanian national minority. This underpins terrorism, which has so far claimed dozens of human lives. It is the right of every State to defend itself from this evil, to protect its territorial integrity, public peace and order and the safety of its citizens. This right is not denied anywhere in the world and it cannot be denied to Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Today's meeting of the Security Council and the adoption of a resolution are not acceptable to the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, since questions that represent an internal matter for Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are at stake. We consider that this internal question cannot be the subject of deliberation in any international forum without the consent of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Such consent has not been granted.

The pretext for this unprecedented action by the Security Council has been found in two anti-terrorist police actions in Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of Serbia. The first was carried out on 28 February in self defence following the killing of four police officers in an ambush, and the second was carried out on 5 March against a terrorist stronghold.

There is not, nor has there been, any armed conflict in Kosovo and Metohija. Hence, there is no danger of a spillover, there is no threat to peace and security and there is no basis for invoking Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

There have been many much larger instances all over the world of not only police, but also military action against terrorists in which civilians have been frequent victims. Yet neither the Security Council nor any other international forum has ever seen fit to raise, in any way whatever, the responsibility of States that are defending themselves against terrorism and protecting their territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Council would be ill advised to do it this time. Were the Council to recognize the right of some States to fight terrorism and deny that right to others in one way or another, or were it even to threaten punitive measures, it would then formally legalize the practice of double standards. It would have catastrophic consequences for the struggle against terrorism in general, erode trust in the Security Council and the entire United Nations system and allow international relations to be governed by the right of might instead of by law and principle.

The positions taken by the Contact Group in London on 9 March 1998 and in Bonn on 25 March 1998 are tantamount to the pursuit of a policy of force and so-called gunboat diplomacy. Under the pressure of certain Powers, the Contact Group, by its policy, places itself above every Government and every principle. Those Powers dictate solutions to internal questions and decide who can and who cannot defend himself against terrorism and separatism. They even determine who must cooperate in the destruction of the integrity of the territory of one's own State. Sanctions are threatened, as well as military intervention, and the normal economic development and lives of millions of people are hampered — and all in the name of democracy and human rights. The Contact Group, by its policy, places itself over and above the Charter of the United Nations in an attempt to transform the Security Council, before the eyes of the world, into a body that merely executes decisions taken at some other place, and with a motivation that is different from the goals and objectives of the Charter.

It is with regret and deep concern that we note that, by their activities, representatives of some permanent members of the Security Council encourage the separatism of the leaders of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija. They are currently causing enormous damage to Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, that policy will bring no good to their own countries either, or to Europe or the world. On the contrary, it is counterproductive and

dangerous for the international legal system and for all the countries and peoples of the world at the threshold of the third millennium.

It is stated in the statements of the Contact Group and the resolution of the Security Council that the situation in Kosovo and Metohija threatens international peace and security in the region. This position is not based on facts, nor on law. It is designed to justify support for separatism and flagrant interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country, a Member State of the United Nations. The arbitrary pressure on Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is aimed at imposing a solution that is a direct threat to the territorial integrity of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A local anti-terrorist police action can never be qualified as a threat to international peace and security. The situation in Kosovo and Metohija is stable and does not threaten, nor can it threaten, in any way the peace and security of neighbouring countries or the region. There are no armed conflicts in Kosovo and Metohija.

It is therefore very clear that there is no basis for invoking Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter or for taking any measure by invoking any other principle or document.

The Contact Group is not authorized to create, by its statements, obligations, legal or factual, for the Security Council to establish the calendar of its meetings and decisions or to determine the content of those decisions. That would deal a serious blow to the dignity of the Security Council.

The real threat to regional peace and security is the overt or covert support that, under the influence of Albanian lobbies in some countries, certain circles — permanent members of the Security Council — render to secessionism and to the leaders of the political parties of the Albanian minority in Kosovo and Metohija. This is contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and contrary to the interests of peace and security in Southeast Europe. It causes great damage to the lasting interests of the members of the Albanian national minority themselves in Serbia and Yugoslavia, as well as in other countries of the region.

We recall that the Government of the Republic of Serbia has addressed a number of public and direct calls to the representatives of the political parties of the Albanian national minority for an unconditional, direct and genuine political dialogue. The representatives of all other minorities that have lived in Kosovo and Metohija for centuries — the Muslims, Romanies, Turks, Croats and others — requested to take part in the dialogue themselves, since questions relative to their rights as well have been raised. Those requests are legitimate and have been accepted. The members of those minorities have publicly condemned terrorism; their lasting desire is to live in Serbia — a State of their own — and to solve all questions relating to the realization of their rights within Serbia and by political means. A considerable number of influential Albanians in Kosovo and Metohija have also distanced themselves from separatism, condemned terrorism and displayed interest in seeking solutions through dialogue to all outstanding questions, as well as better living conditions in Serbia, alongside all other citizens.

The leaders of some political parties of the Albanian national minority are the only ones who have not heeded the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to unconditional dialogue. They continue to turn a deaf ear to the appeals of the international community to condemn terrorism publicly and to give up the idea of independence.

Consequently, who is responsible for separatism and terrorism in Kosovo and Metohija or for the procrastination and delay of the dialogue? Serbia, which, by its Constitution and laws, guarantees all rights to the members of all national minorities under the highest European standards — rights that are exercised by the members of 26 out of the total of 27 national minorities in its territory? Or is it the leaders of separatism who — by pressure, blackmail and even by recourse to terrorism — force the boycott of those rights?

Since the Republic of Serbia is deeply convinced that procrastination and the delay of the beginning of a direct political dialogue are unjustified and harmful and that they block the genuine political process in Kosovo and Metohija, the President of the Republic of Serbia, Milan Milutinović, issued on 18 March 1998 the declaration on the political process in Kosovo and Metohija, calling on the leaders of the political parties of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija to embark upon a political dialogue without delay or conditions. The President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosević, fully supported the declaration and designated his personal envoy to conduct dialogue with the representatives of the Albanian and other national minorities in Kosovo and Metohija.

By its declaration of 31 March 1998, the new Government of the Republic of Serbia further reaffirmed the initiative and its openness to a genuine and unconditional dialogue and renewed its invitation to the leaders of the Albanian political parties to dialogue, for it is clear that no other solution is available.

The agreement on the implementation of the Education Agreement is an important positive accomplishment. Besides, the Institute of Albanology in Priština was officially opened yesterday by the representatives of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and made available to its Albanian users. This is the only institution of its kind for the Albanian minority in South-East Europe, and it is unique in Europe in the context of the exercise of minority rights by any national minority.

Upholding its principled position that it is necessary to regularize Yugoslavia's full-fledged membership in the OSCE, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has expressed its readiness to receive, on a contractual basis, an OSCE mission of longer duration. We would like to trust, in the objectivity of this mission, for we believe that it could contribute to spreading the truth about the situation in Kosovo and Metohija. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is also ready to receive a personal representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and of the European Community to conduct talks with the representatives of the Government on questions of cooperation and normalization of relations.

Considering that the limited action in the area of Drenica has ended and that the situation is stable, the special anti-terrorist unit, with its equipment and means, has been withdrawn to its permanent base outside the region. This has been affirmed also in the declaration of the new Government of the Republic of Serbia of 31 March 1998.

The official judicial authorities have opened an inquiry aimed at establishing facts relative to the allegations that the police exceeded their authority during the anti-terrorist actions.

Serbia and the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are quite open to cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which we consider the key humanitarian organization. This was borne out also by the letter of 24 March 1998 to the ICRC President from the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Zivadin Jovanović. Representatives of the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations operate freely in Kosovo and Metohija, which was confirmed also by the ICRC representative in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. On 15 March 1998 the Government of the Republic of Serbia also extended an invitation to Cornelio Sommaruga, ICRC President, to send an ad hoc group of expert pathologists, composed of representatives of various countries, to Kosovo and Metohija to establish facts relative, in particular, to the allegations that civilians have been killed in the aforementioned anti-terrorist actions. Separate invitations have also been extended to a number of countries to send their independent experts, who, alongside the Yugoslav pathologists and judicial authorities, would carry out that task.

Official Yugoslav representatives have reaffirmed their readiness to cooperate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose office in Belgrade carries out its activities on the entire territory of Yugoslavia undisturbed.

Terrorist actions and secessionist goals cannot be equated with the legitimate struggle against terrorism: the defence of a State, its sovereignty, its integrity and the safety of its citizens.

Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have nothing to hide in Kosovo and Metohija. Foreign diplomats and other representatives, and hundreds of foreign journalists and parliamentarians visit and travel up and down Yugoslavia and Serbia every day. Besides, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international humanitarian organizations and governmental and non-governmental organizations operate in Kosovo and Metohija undisturbed. These are facts that cannot be denied.

Kosovo and Metohija is an integral part of Serbia, and every problem arising in that Serbian province is an internal matter. Serbia is firmly committed to an unconditional dialogue with the members of the Albanian minority and to the solution of all questions through political means in accordance with European standards.

As a signatory of the Helsinki Final Act and as a European country, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accepts all standards of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and of the Council of Europe relative to the rights of national minorities, and is open to full and constructive cooperation. However, questions of constitutional and State organization, relations between various levels of government and relations between government and self-rule belong to the internal

jurisdiction of States. Such questions are internal matters for each sovereign State and hence for Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Such questions brook no foreign intervention or internationalization. It is my firm belief that this position is in full conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

The call of some countries for solutions to be sought outside Serbia — or, as they say, within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia — constitutes a violation of the territorial integrity of Serbia, a State which has been in existence for more than 13 centuries, much longer than even the first ideas of "Yugoslavness". The United Nations must not allow itself to be a confederate of those who loath the idea of one integrated Serbia as a republic of equal citizens. The Security Council should continue to uphold the noble principle that all countries, big or small, are equal. It should not harbour policies of force and double standards.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Germany. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Eitel (Germany): At the outset, Sir, let me express my delegation's satisfaction and my personal pleasure at having seen you preside over this month's Security Council meetings -- and, especially, over today's meeting, which marks an important step in the efforts to bring peace to Kosovo. Let me add that my compliments go also to your predecessor, our colleague from Gabon.

I want now to affirm that Germany fully supports and subscribes to the statement that the representative of the United Kingdom made on behalf of the European Union.

In the Kosovo region of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, tension has been building up over several years. Repression of the Kosovar Albanian community and serious violations of human rights contributed to this, along with increasing doubts within that community about the success of the Kosovar Albanian leadership's course of non-violent opposition. Guerrilla attacks on police stations and the excessive use of force by Yugoslav security forces, resulting in at least 80 fatalities, were the latest steps in that escalation. My country is deeply concerned about this political state of affairs, as well as about the resulting humanitarian situation.

More than many other States, Germany is affected by this situation. Germany is the refuge of an estimated 300,000 ethnic Albanians, most of them from Kosovo, out of the total of an estimated 1.3 million persons from the former Yugoslavia currently living in Germany. When on 25 March, the Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group met in Bonn to discuss the situation in Kosovo, some 40,000 Kosovar Albanians also met in Bonn — for a peaceful demonstration.

After the latest outbreak of violence, on 6 March, Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel sent a message to you, Mr. President, calling for the Security Council to address the situation in Kosovo. We thank you, Sir, for your prompt response to that request. Along with the other Contact Group members, we had been actively seeking the preparation of the resolution just adopted by the Council. The explosive situation in the Kosovo region constitutes a clear threat to international peace and security. The genesis of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which in the beginning was considered by some to be an internal matter, is still very much alive in our memories. The outside world cannot simply stand by and watch a new, potentially even more devastating conflict develop in the region.

Alongside the Security Council, the Contact Group has been actively involved in the ongoing international peace efforts to avoid further bloodshed and bring about a political solution. At its ministerial meeting in London on 9 March, the Contact Group spelled out clearly what the international community expects from both sides. In particular, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was called upon: to withdraw special police units and cease excessive action by security forces affecting the civilian population; to allow access by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations; and to commit itself publicly to begin a process of dialogue with the leadership of the Kosovar Albanians.

On 19 March, the Foreign Ministers of France and of Germany, Hubert Védrine and Klaus Kinkel, travelled to Belgrade together and came home with a number of commitments by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

At their meeting on 25 March in Bonn, the Foreign Ministers of the Contact Group assessed the developments and came to the conclusion that there had been progress in some areas of concern, in particular an understanding on the implementation of the Education Agreement. The overall assessment, however, was that the actions taken by the leadership of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia fell short of the demands laid down at the London meeting, and that the Contact Group

therefore had to maintain the measures taken against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In this context, and hand in hand with the United Nations and the Contact Group, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union also have a crucial role to play. We fully support the skilful efforts of Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek of Poland as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE as well as the role of mediator foreseen for the former Prime Minister of Spain, Felipe González. It is also worth noting that the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has affirmed its jurisdiction regarding the violence in Kosovo and begun gathering information on the latest events.

Today's resolution sends two very clear messages. First, the international community will do its utmost to avoid a resurgence of violence in the Balkans region; and secondly, a political solution of the Kosovo problem is more than overdue. We condemn violence and terrorism, no matter which side is to blame.

Germany wants to see the Kosovo problem solved peacefully, through negotiations. We therefore support the call upon the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the leadership of the Kosovar Albanians, contained in the resolution, to enter without preconditions into a meaningful dialogue, including on political status issues. Without prejudging what the result may be, the resolution supports an enhanced status for Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, with a substantially greater degree of autonomy and meaningful self-administration. Such a solution would by no means impair the sovereignty or the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The arms embargo foreseen in the resolution is an effort to prevent an arms buildup of the opposing sides. It is, however, also a political measure which illustrates that resorting to violence and rejecting meaningful dialogue will bring those responsible, and the countrymen they bear responsibility for, farther away from the beneficial normalization of their relations with the outside world. The fate of their countrymen and of their own international position is at stake.

Germany therefore supports the resolution adopted by the Council today.

The President: I thank the representative of Germany for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Italy. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Terzi de Sant'Agata (Italy): I would like to express the warmest congratulations of my delegation to you, Sir, and to your country for having so successfully presided over the intense work of the Council this month. I would like to extend the same congratulations to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Gabon.

I wish first of all to associate myself with the statement made by the chargé d'affaires of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. Italy fully supports the European Union's position on the situation in Kosovo and the common position adopted in Brussels on 19 March.

In early March, the Kosovo crisis broke out, giving rise to acts of violence that we firmly condemn. The international community has stepped up initiatives to prevent this conflict from plunging the region into yet another vicious cycle of ethnic bloodshed, which would destroy the delicate balance that had brought some measure of stability after years of civil war. Our concern is that the Kosovo question will have repercussions on the entire Balkans region, where the international community has been engaged in a monumental effort to halt the process of disintegration and foster the healing and rehabilitation of the State institutions.

Italy is playing an active role in these efforts and has made a substantial contribution through its leadership of the multinational force in Albania last year, its support of economic development cooperation in that country and in the area, and its sizable participation in the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Italy also takes active part in and will continue to contribute to the decision-making process in the Contact Group, the European Union, and here at the United Nations.

In London, on 9 March, the Contact Group identified the objectives that needed to be pursued to defuse the crisis and the instruments required to achieve them. In Bonn, on 25 March, it was acknowledged that some progress had been made, but that some requests had not been fulfilled.

A positive step was taken in Priština on 23 March, when the protocol for the application of the Education Agreement was signed. In our opinion, the protocol represents a clear confidence-building measure; it was

made possible by the decisive contribution of Monsignor Vicenzo Paglia of the Comunitá di' Sant'Egidio, to whom Italy and other countries in the Contact Group afforded the broadest support. For its part, Italy hopes that these understandings can facilitate a solution that grants an enhanced status of autonomy and respect to the cultural identity of the Kosovar people, as they rightly expect.

In the meantime, we have kept up an intense dialogue with the Belgrade authorities and the Kosovar Albanian leadership in Priština. We are convinced that the international community must insist that Belgrade implement all our requests. We must be equally steadfast in urging the Priština authorities to accept the offer to start a political dialogue without setting conditions. A greater degree of autonomy on the basis of the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia can be negotiated. At the same time, the Kosovar Albanians must bear in mind that the road to independence would only create new conflicts and that any attempts at compromise would be voided by a radical position.

Italy hopes that the start of a concrete, open-minded dialogue between Belgrade and Priština will be inserted in a process that, should it bear positive fruit, will improve the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's prospects for full participation in the international organizations. In this perspective, Italy believes that talks should be pursued with both parties and that we must urge Belgrade to fulfil the requests made, including the unconditional start of political dialogue, the complete withdrawal of the special police forces, consent to a joint mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union, and access to Kosovo for humanitarian organizations.

This is why today's resolution imposes an arms embargo on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: to prevent the aggravation of an already unstable situation and weapons from prevailing over dialogue. I would like underline that this resolution contains a firm condemnation not only of all forms of violence, but also of terrorism, which must be rejected without reservation. This is why we take note of Dr. Rugova's commitment to non-violence and hope that it will be explicitly shared by all the political forces in Kosovo.

Today's decision completes the package of measures adopted in London on 9 March. The Contact Group will meet again in late April to verify progress in the political dialogue and in the attitude of the parties. Until then, my country will continue to do its utmost in Belgrade and Priština to foster a peaceful solution to the question, in the spirit of the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki principles, and the OSCE standards.

The President: I thank the representative of Italy for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Tanç (Turkey): First of all, Sir, I should like to express our appreciation at seeing you preside over the proceedings of the Council during this month, and my delegation would like also to thank the Permanent Representative of Gabon for presiding over the Council's work last month.

Turkey is gravely concerned at the situation in Kosovo and the wider implications it may have for peace, security and stability in the region and beyond. Unless appropriate measures are taken in time, the conflict in Kosovo will intensify and may drag the Balkans into serious turmoil. The tragic consequences of the international community's not having shown a sufficient and timely response to such a crisis were witnessed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The dangers inherent in the situation in Kosovo have been visible since at least 1989, when the acquired rights of autonomy and self-administration of the people of Kosovo were suddenly abrogated. Moreover, the economic hardships and deprivation faced by the people of Kosovo following the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia put unbearable strain on their endurance. The restrictions on the right of education also added fuel to the feeling of deep resentment, as, over the years, children have been deprived of adequate education.

Consequently, as a reaction, the desire for independence in Kosovo has grown. And the new Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), instead of reinstating the rights of the people of Kosovo, has resorted to repression and agitation. The reaction of the Kosovar Albanians to all this has reached the point of explosion.

The rights taken away from the people of Kosovo should be restored to them urgently. Unless an agreed solution is found, the explosion in Kosovo may shake all

the neighbouring countries, including all the Balkan countries, and lead to a wider international crisis.

The democratic and pluralistic nature of Kosovo is of the utmost importance. The presence of a Turkish community in Kosovo, the large number of Turkish citizens of Balkan origin and Turkey's geographic location will further explain our close attention to this crisis. Turkey is keenly interested in the finding of a satisfactory solution to the plight of the people of Kosovo and in the protection of their acquired and human rights.

In this context, since tensions escalated in the Kosovo region and violence broke out on 28 February, resulting in loss of life, Turkey has been in contact with many concerned parties and with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia authorities with a view to seeing an end to the violence and the commencement of a political process. The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs visited Belgrade on 7 and 8 March. We participated in the adoption of the declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of countries of South-Eastern Europe, which set out the elements of a political process. We support the efforts of the Contact Group, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

My Government has formulated the following proposals towards finding a concrete solution to the Kosovo problem.

A solution to the dispute must be found through comprehensive dialogue between the parties and within the framework of the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Any resort to acts of terrorism or violence must be avoided.

It should be possible for a third party, which will be decided on by the two sides, to assume a function that would facilitate reaching a settlement.

The dialogue aimed at reinstating all the rights of all the ethnic minorities in Kosovo should begin immediately. These minorities, including the Turkish community, should be represented in the talks concerning the future of Kosovo. The solution to be found should guarantee the rights of all the ethnic minority groups, together with the Albanian majority.

Effective measures against the possibility of violence and repression in Kosovo should be taken with the participation of the international community, which should also contribute to meeting the urgent economic and humanitarian needs of the people of Kosovo and displaced persons.

The gravity of the situation is of such dimensions as to warrant the urgent action taken by the Security Council. We hope that the determined efforts of the international community will not only help resolve this problem through peaceful means but also set a lasting precedent both for the region and beyond.

The President: I thank the representative of Turkey for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Babar (Pakistan): It is a pleasure, Sir, to see you presiding over the meeting of the Security Council today. We note with satisfaction that the Council has taken a number of important decisions under your presidency during the current month.

The situation in Kosovo is a matter of great concern for the international community. The reign of terror let loose by the Serbian forces in Kosovo has resulted in the killing of a large number of civilians, including women, children and the elderly. We are deeply concerned that the Serbian forces have yet again resorted to "ethnic cleansing", which should be deplored by the international community in the strongest possible terms.

The Government of Pakistan strongly condemns the genocide of the ethnic Albanians by the Serbian forces in Kosovo. Pakistan also strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whether perpetrated against the people of Kashmir, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine or Kosovo.

The Serbian forces should immediately cease their coercive action against the people of Kosovo and take steps to protect and promote internationally accepted norms of human rights. We must not allow the perpetrators of heinous crimes against humanity to go unpunished.

The Government of Pakistan supports the measures proposed by the Security Council in the resolution it has adopted today. The international community must not allow a repetition of genocide and "ethnic cleansing" by alien oppressors anywhere in the world.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Albania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): First of all I would like to commend Ambassador Abdoulie Momodou Sallah of Gambia for his excellent job conducting the work of the Security Council during this month.

The adoption of this resolution by the Security Council attests to the immediate reaction of the international community in order to reach a swift and peaceful solution, thus avoiding a new tragedy which may have larger and more frightening dimensions than the tragedy of Bosnia. This action reaffirms the primary and important role of the United Nations and its organs, which, working in close cooperation through preventive diplomacy with the democratic States, are striving to apply the new philosophy of the end of this century: the new world order, the order of democracy and freedom for citizens.

The Republic of Albania hails and supports every initiative or action offered by the Contact Group, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and other countries and international organizations which have assumed the responsibility of offering their invaluable contribution to bring an end to the crisis in Kosovo and to its peaceful resolution. The Albanian Government commends the statements of the Contact Group in London and Bonn, and the Security Council's statement to the press on the situation in Kosovo, and it appreciates all the efforts of the members of the Coordinating and Consultative Process of the Contact Group in New York (CCP) and the Security Council in searching for the most acceptable position for the parties involved with the goal of assuring stability and peace in the region.

We all hoped that the achievement of peace in Bosnia and the success of the Dayton process, as well as the tragic loss of the lives of hundreds of thousand of innocent citizens in the former Yugoslavia, would be a great historic lesson in the way of understanding the value of coexistence among nations and States, of bringing an end to the instincts of hate and domination, thus enabling people to cooperate and integrate with each other. It is quite to the contrary in Kosovo, where, the ethnic Albanians constituting over 90 per cent of the population, the violence and terror exercised by the Serbian authorities not only suppress the rights and the freedom of the citizens, but above all deny the Albanian people the right to life.

There is no historic medieval symbol to justify or legitimize the criminal killings of the innocent Albanian civilian population. The Albanian people are resilient, thanks to their philosophy of survival, which is a philosophy of freedom and democracy, based on the right to education and self-government and on their resolve to gain their legitimate rights in a peaceful way, as was testified once more in the last parliamentary elections of 22 March 1998 in Kosovo, which reconfirmed the peaceful approach of Dr. Rugova.

The Government of the Republic of Albania has long been elaborating the concept of cooperation among the Balkan States, of mutual understanding among nations as a precondition for the integration of the Balkans into democratic European civilization. The summit of Crete held last year was an expression of our good will to this end. The Albanian Government has repeatedly appealed to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to respect the national identity of the Albanian population not only in accordance with the standards of the former Yugoslavia, but also with the standards of the nations and citizens of the free world, and to legalize political, administrative, cultural, media and religious institutions in Kosovo.

The Republic of Albania believes that there will be no peace in the region as long as there no political and economic balance between the forces, the States and the nations involved. My Government favours a peaceful resolution of the conflict, does not support the use of violence and is firm in demanding a harsh condemnation of Serbia. It calls for the immediate withdrawal of the Serbian military, paramilitary and police forces and for serious talks, declaring that borders will not change and that the Kosovo problem must be considered as were those of other Yugoslav republics, always by applying the European model.

The adoption of this resolution by the Security Council along with all initiatives and actions of various countries and international organizations will guarantee the establishment of the necessary balance in the region. Given the dimensions of the Kosovo crisis and the danger of it spilling over to the south of the Balkan Peninsula, which might have unforeseeable dimensions, the crisis goes far beyond the limits of "some implications for the regional security". We do believe that the great responsibility of the Member States of the Security

Council to preserve peace and security in the area, in order to avoid a new tragedy, will guide them to take the necessary decisions without delay.

The logic of normal diplomatic action and the logic of historical precedent, as well as the observance of traditional balances, cannot be successful in the face of a new impending tragedy.

Allow me to express on this occasion my country's gratitude for the swift action and long-term approach of the United States of America, the European Union and the members of the Contact Group towards the resolution of the crisis. We believe that the spirit of responsibility and understanding that accompany the adoption of this Security Council resolution will guide its member States in their future actions on this very important issue.

The President: I thank the representative of Albania for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Poland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Wyzner (Poland): Speaking on the last day of your term as President of the Security Council, Sir, I would like to convey our appreciation for the leadership you have provided to the Council during the month of March. May I also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Dangue Réwaka of Gabon, on his successful conduct of the Council's work in the month of February.

I should also like to associate myself unequivocally with statement made on behalf of the European Union by Mr. Richmond.

Like other members of the international community, Poland is seriously concerned at the situation in Kosovo. Without being addressed in an adequate way, contained and eventually resolved, the crisis is bound to adversely affect the still fragile peace and security in this part of Europe.

On 10 March 1998, Professor Bronislaw Geremek, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), presented "The Action Plan for Kosovo". It was later endorsed by the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in its Decision 218 of 11 March 1998, which contains a number of concrete measures that, if implemented by the parties concerned, could help in decreasing existing tensions and creating the climate necessary for starting meaningful dialogue between the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Albanian community in Kosovo.

During the last 10 days the Head of the OSCE, together with other members of that Organization's Troika visited Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The main conclusion drawn from the extensive talks with leaders of the countries bordering the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is that they perceive the situation in Kosovo as a real threat to the stability of the whole area and, consequently, that they expect the international community to play a role in resolving the crisis. As for the talks in Belgrade, it is clear that the decisive steps remain to be taken by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Serbian authorities in order to make the peaceful resolution of the Kosovo dilemma a reality.

My country fully shares the assessment of the situation in Kosovo formulated at the London and Bonn meetings of the Contact Group, held on 9 and 25 March 1998 respectively, and supports the ensuing conclusions. I refer in particular to paragraph 6 of the Bonn statement, according to which Belgrade has not yet fully complied with the requirements of the Contact Group. May I emphasize at this point that consent for the mission of Mr. Felipe González, as Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and European Union Special Representative, is long overdue. We also deem it important to add our voice to those calling for the urgent start of the process of unconditional dialogue with the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community, involving the federal Yugoslav and Serbian republican levels of government. It is imperative that both sides promptly convene talks in order to agree on a framework for a substantive negotiating process, with the participation of an outside representative or representatives.

We support the Kosovar Albanians' right to enjoy a substantially greater degree of autonomy, including meaningful self-administration within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Any attempt to suppress this right, especially by using force, deserves condemnation.

At the same time, my country unequivocally opposes all terrorist activities. The only way to resolve the situation in Kosovo is through peaceful dialogue and negotiation. Violence leads nowhere: this is true with regard to extremist elements among the Kosovar

Albanians, and it is also true with regard to the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the police in Kosovo.

The threat of violence still present in Kosovo has to be removed. We understand that this is one of the main objectives of the resolution that was adopted a short while ago by the Council. By its adoption, the Security Council sent an appropriately strong signal that the international community is determined not to allow further deterioration of the situation in Kosovo and that it expects the parties concerned to implement the steps leading to a genuine, lasting and peaceful solution to the crisis, as stipulated in the relevant documents of the OSCE and the Contact Group.

The President: I thank the representative of Poland for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Hungary. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erdös (Hungary) (*interpretation from French*): First allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on the work you have accomplished this month as President of the Security Council.

Hungary associates itself with the statement made earlier by the Presidency of the European Union with regard to the problem of Kosovo. Like the entire international community, it is following with particular attention the serious events that are taking place in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. As a neighbouring country, Hungary feels increasingly anxious about the evolving situation in Kosovo. Tension in this region of Yugoslavia is a new and disturbing source of destabilization, all the more dramatic given that nearby we are witnessing the very welcome economic and political consolidation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while in Croatia the process of the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia is progressing successfully.

It is important to underline that the reasons for the crisis in Kosovo are not new and that they should have been addressed long ago. The authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should have taken necessary measures much earlier to prevent the current explosion of violence. Repeated omissions in this area have led to a situation that threatens to ignite the whole region, which is already very volatile.

Hungary considers Kosovo an integral part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It feels that it is only on the basis of this principle that the future of the region can be settled. On the other hand, it is also important to find a lasting solution to the question of the status of Kosovo and the problems relating to the enjoyment of human rights by the Albanian community, which has been living there for centuries. We believe that it is precisely the lack of appropriate attention over the years to the rights of minorities and to their legitimate claims that has led to the present situation. Having said that, we condemn recourse to violence and terrorism, whoever the perpetrators. Such actions can hardly bring about calm or lead to a genuine solution.

The modalities for arrangements relating to the status of Kosovo will certainly depend on the outcome of a substantive dialogue, which we hope will begin without delay, between the authorities in Belgrade and the representatives of the Kosovar Albanians, with external participation. If it is to be acceptable to the parties, this outcome will have to be in conformity with the standards set by various relevant international instruments. In the meantime, patient but methodical work to introduce the greatest possible number of confidence measures, in order to create a climate conducive to such a dialogue, must continue relentlessly. It is reason on all sides, rather than blind impulse, that must prevail.

Hungary cannot accept that the problem of Kosovo should be dealt with as a strictly internal matter. This argument would not even deserve mention here if recent conflicts in this part of Europe had not reached such horrifying proportions. Given the tragedy and bloodshed that has swept over so many people, with 200,000 killed and 2 million exiled, I do not believe that I need to elaborate. Our essential task, here at the United Nations and in other international multilateral forums, consists precisely in preventing a deterioration of events in Kosovo such as took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To that end, the Government of Yugoslavia must admit the futility of arguing against the international community's offers of assistance. Belgrade must look forward rather than backward; it must base its policy not on the events of yesterday, not on old historical animosities that all of us — all of us — in Europe, including in Central and Eastern Europe, have experienced, but on a vision of tomorrow, on the interdependence and coexistence of communities of differing ethnic and religious origins. It is important that the Yugoslav authorities should sit at the negotiating table

with representatives of the Kosovar Albanian community to resolve, peacefully and politically, the problems that face them.

It is indispensable that they should permit the return to Yugoslavia of long-term missions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and that they should recognize not only in words but in deeds the importance of full respect for the rights of minorities and of their participation in public life. This would go a long way towards halting the wave of violence and terrorism that is spreading over Kosovo. To do this, the Government of Yugoslavia will have to accept the logic of granting to non-Serb ethnic communities in Yugoslavia rights similar to those that it demands for Serb populations living outside its territory.

To overcome the crisis, one must avoid the pitfalls of anti-Albanian — and anti-Serb — nationalist passions, which only poison the situation in Kosovo. Rather than offering vague promises and so-called concessions on matters of secondary importance, there must be a focus on the real issues, on matters that are of primary importance, without any delay or procrastination. In that context, we welcome the progress that has recently been made. Only in this way can Yugoslavia improve its international position.

As a country directly affected by the situation on our borders, and having maintained fruitful, excellent relations with our neighbour to the south, Hungary ventures to hope that the day will soon come when we can welcome to international forums a Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that is at peace with itself and with the various ethnic and religious communities living on its territory.

The resolution that the Security Council has just adopted will help begin the process needed to identify the elements of a long-term political solution for Kosovo.

The President: I thank the representative of Hungary for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Croatia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): The Republic of Croatia shares the concerns of the international community on the situation in Kosovo and the impending threat to international peace and security which it constitutes. Croatia, as a neighbour of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, is vitally interested in a speedy resolution of the crisis.

Croatia believes that all political issues in Kosovo, including its future status, must be resolved between the Belgrade authorities and Kosovar Albanians through a genuinely democratic political process. The dialogue has to take into account both the opinions of the Arbitration Commission of the International Conference on Yugoslavia — The Badinter Commission — on the inviolability of the borders of new States established following the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and the tradition of territorial autonomy in Kosovo. The disrespect that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia showed for the opinions of the Badinter Commission regarding the territorial integrity of neighbouring Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is now, regarding Kosovo, returning like a boomerang.

Croatia welcomes — and emphasizes the importance of — the readiness of the international community to help facilitate this process, as demonstrated by the resolution that the Security Council has just adopted. My delegation believes that the willingness of the international community to play an active role in alleviating the tension is vital for the achievement of a political solution. Croatia supports all the efforts undertaken by the international community in this regard, particularly the endeavours made by the Contact Group and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) aimed at halting the escalation of the conflict.

Croatia joins others in condemning the violation of human rights in Kosovo and denounces all acts and forms of terrorism, regardless of whether they are committed by a State, a group or an individual, bearing in mind that State terrorism represents the most dangerous form of terrorism because of the resources available to States.

It is very clear that police repression is an unacceptable method for resolving political issues in Kosovo. Croatia expressed its disagreement with such repressive methods used by Serbian authorities even during the time of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, when the Socialist Republic of Croatia withdrew its police forces from the federal units deployed in Kosovo. Today, as an independent and sovereign State, Croatia adds its voice to the efforts of the international community in seeking a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Croatia is particularly concerned by the possible humanitarian catastrophe which could be caused by the present crisis. The international community cannot allow the same pattern of humanitarian disasters experienced in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to be repeated in Kosovo. On this issue Croatia speaks from the experience of a country which has during the past six years taken care of more than 800,000 refugees and displaced persons.

In this context, my delegation welcomes the fact that the resolution calls on the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to allow international humanitarian organizations full access to Kosovo in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe and to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population. Croatia holds this to be a humanitarian imperative.

Croatia acknowledges the importance of normalizing relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the rest of the international community. However, I should like to stress that the participation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in international institutions is conditional upon its application for membership and the fulfilment of all criteria for acceptance into those institutions, as is the case with every new applicant. Consequently, it is the understanding of my delegation that this is the only context within which paragraph 18 of the resolution can be interpreted. The issue of succession to the former Yugoslavia cannot be linked to the Kosovo crisis, because it is a matter which involves all the successor States to the former Yugoslavia and must be resolved on the basis of the opinions of the Badinter Commission and international law.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Greece. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zacharakis (Greece): Let me first of all express my appreciation for the work accomplished during your month's term in your high office. May I also congratulate on this occasion your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Gabon.

My delegation subscribes to the statement delivered by the representative of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. I wish, however, to dwell further, very briefly, upon certain points that are of special importance to my country.

Greece, being a country of the area, takes a keen and direct interest in the maintenance of peace and stability in the Balkans and is therefore concerned over developments in Kosovo as well as with the repercussions that the possible deterioration of the situation there could have on the stability of the region. In this context, Greece actively participated in the meetings of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Countries of South-Eastern Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria, and Bonn on 10 and 25 March, respectively, and adheres to the joint statements adopted there, hoping that the relevant decisions will lead to a swift settlement of the issue in question.

My country firmly believes that a solution in Kosovo must be sought only through peaceful means, namely through dialogue between the Government in Belgrade and the Kosovar Albanian leadership. Terrorism must be wholly condemned and so must the excessive use of force insofar as it stifles the free exercise of human rights.

On the other hand, Greece particularly insists upon the need to safeguard the inviolability of existing international borders, which is a fundamental and *sine qua non* condition for peace and stability in the Balkans. In this respect, Greece fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and categorically rejects any secessionist claims.

Finally, I wish to express my country's support for the resolution adopted by the Council today, which in our view is balanced and should be implemented by all parties concerned. But I would also like to point out that any measures against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should also take into account the stability of south-eastern Europe and should not unduly harm States in the region, which were particularly hit by the negative consequences of the sanctions regime in the years 1992 through 1996.

The President: I thank the representative of Greece for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Considering that it is 31 March and a rather late hour, I would like to commend you, Sir, and your delegation for the most comprehensive and appropriate manner in which you have handled your presidency of the Security Council, and in particular this debate.

The development of the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, both in spirit and substance, cannot help

but be impacted by the situation in Kosovo and our neighbour in general, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Many formulate that the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia started with the unilateral repudiation of Kosovo's autonomous status within the ex-Yugoslavia and that the circle will be completed only with the just and stable resolution of this situation. The commitment of the Stabilization Force, the Office of the High Representative and other international factors, including the United Nations, have given the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina a more stable foundation, minimizing the risk of spill-over.

Nonetheless, the longer-term developments and solutions for Kosovo can only have a substantial impact on peace, stability and the development of democracy, human rights and minority and national rights in the region as a whole. In this context, my delegation believes that it is imperative that the following fundamentals be incorporated into any process designed to produce immediate and longer-term solutions.

First, we welcome the Security Council's role, as well as that of other relevant international factors, in this process, and emphasize the determinative importance of the Security Council's remaining seized of the matter. The situation in Kosovo does have more than a passing impact upon stability and peace in the region and international security as a whole.

Second, in the same vein, the authority and active role of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is unquestionable and necessary in this situation, despite the prolonged attempt of certain parties to negate its jurisdiction. Bosnia and Herzegovina itself cannot morally, politically or legally remain silent; as our former colleague, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, so appropriately put it, the Belgrade authorities will not be allowed to do in Kosovo with what they can no longer get away with in Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Ethnic cleansing" is intolerable for all, but those of us who have been victims and overcome must be especially clear and add our voices to the vigilant chorus of "Never Again". We are not dealing with ethnic madness, but with the political manipulation of differences for crude, selfish power.

Third, Bosnia and Herzegovina stresses the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all the States in the region, without any prejudice to the eventual solution.

Fourth, at the same time we must emphasize that the basis for solution, not only in Kosovo, but in Sandjak and Vojvodina, lies with full respect for the democratic, human, national and minority rights of all the citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Fifth, the role of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been frequently addressed before this body. I do not need to remind the Council of the context of those references. However, we must emphasize that the health of our neighbour also reflects upon our own.

Sixth, let me draw the Council's attention to paragraphs 8, 9, 10 and 15 of the resolution before us. Paragraph 15 in particular addresses the neighbours of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Of course, that means us. Again, the role of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) reflected a military relationship in its dealings with our country in the past. We would like to stress the importance of the arms-control arrangements negotiated under the authority of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, both within the region and in our country. Here, the heightened vigilance of monitors can be helpful in assuring that new abuses are not invented and old abuses not repeated. Arms monitors ensuring compliance and deterring cross-border transfers should receive our most active support.

Seventh, we would like to underline the consistency of the interpretation provided by the Permanent Representative of Slovenia, Dr. Danilo Türk, today with that of the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as this relates to paragraph 18 of the resolution before us.

Mr. President, thank you. I am confident that the most responsible members of the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, have learned the painful lessons of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the decisive importance of the right response at the right time. We soon will be able to judge as to whether today's action by the Security Council will do the job.

The President: I thank the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today, the Security Council adopted a resolution reimposing an international embargo on the export of arms to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There is no doubt that this is a step, though it may be regarded as a step backward with regard to the developments in the area in general, yet it is a realistic reflection of the recent deterioration of the situation in Kosovo.

Egypt considers the content of today's resolution as a preventive message, which we hope that the concerned parties will fully understand in a way that will prevent the situation in the area from further deterioration and protect the lives of the innocent Albanian civilians in the region. This is especially so since the resolution adopted today clearly condemns the excessive use of force by the Serbian police against the civilians of Kosovo and clearly defines the steps that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should take in order to open the way for the Security Council to review the sanctions imposed on it today.

Our delegation has noted that the Security Council candidly refers to the fact that this resolution has been adopted under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter without a prior reference to a determination by the Security Council that there exists a threat to international peace and security as required by the provisions of Article 39 of the Charter. Of course, it may be said that the Council is the master of its own procedures, and this is correct with regard to procedures. However, in principle, the constitutional requirements in the Charter should in general be scrupulously followed and respected. The delegation of Egypt would like to record this observation with regard to the future work of the Council.

At the same time, Egypt supports the content of the resolution, namely its call upon the authorities in Belgrade and the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community urgently to enter without preconditions into a serious dialogue in order to reach a political settlement of the situation in Kosovo. Such a settlement should take into consideration the interests and the aspirations of the Albanian community, which accounts for 90 per cent of the population of the region, which has long had a special status.

The situation in Kosovo represents a source of grave concern to public opinion the world over. For this reason, the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference adopted, at their latest meeting in Qatar in March, a resolution in which they condemned the wide-ranging acts of suppression, the discriminatory measures and the human rights violations against the Albanian inhabitants. They also called on the international community to take the necessary steps to immediately end these violations and to set up democratic institutions in Kosovo. The adoption by the Council today of this resolution is a step towards the achievement of what the Foreign Ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference called for two weeks ago.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the parties concerned would exercise their authority responsibly through the desired dialogue in order to reach a just solution that would restore stability, security and peace to the region.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): The violent incidents which have recently shaken the Kosovo province, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, have drawn the focused attention of the international community. The horrible remembrances of the not-so-distant events in Bosnia, which resulted in thousands of innocent victims, the practice of "ethnic cleansing" and floods of refugees are still vivid in our memory.

Although we believe that this is an internal affair of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the current situation in Kosovo cannot but cause grave concern in Ukraine, as a country which is adjacent to the Balkans. The fact that these events are accompanied by violations of human rights, acts of violence and casualties among the civilian population causes us special concern.

The possibility of further confrontation and the real threat of the escalation of the situation might lead to the destabilization of the whole region, where, with the active involvement of the international community, concrete measures towards a normalization of the situation are being undertaken.

Ukraine expresses its hope that in the nearest future the situation in Kosovo will be settled through existing multilateral mechanisms by means of peaceful dialogue, tolerance and mutual understanding. Ukraine welcomes recent diplomatic initiatives in this regard. For its part, Ukraine stands ready to facilitate this process by all possible means, in particular through the efforts of the

Contact Group and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

My delegation welcomes this timely meeting of the Security Council, convened today to address the situation in Kosovo. We hope that the adoption by the Security Council of the resolution, and in particular the introduction of the arms embargo, will foster the search for peaceful solutions to this serious problem. At the same time, Ukraine remains of the opinion that any negative consequences which might affect third States as a result of further restrictions imposed by the Security Council against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, should be properly considered by the Council. It is our hope that soon the Security Council will be ready to evaluate the real effect of this and other measures introduced by the resolution just adopted, as well as the mechanism of its implementation.

In conclusion, Ukraine calls upon the authorities in Belgrade and the leadership of the Kosovar Albanian community to urgently enter without preconditions into a meaningful dialogue on political status issues. I should like to reconfirm the readiness of Ukraine to facilitate this dialogue.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have just received a letter from the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me first say, Sir, how happy we are that you are presiding over the important deliberations of the Council today. We are also thankful to you for convening this important meeting.

The situation in Kosovo has caused considerable international outrage because of the excessive use of force by Serbian police against the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, which has resulted in considerable loss of life and material damage. This international outrage finds further grounds and is duly increased because it is reminder of an unholy and dark experience in Bosnia that has yet to be fully resolved. The experience of Bosnia cannot and should not be allowed to be repeated.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly raised deep concern about the deteriorating situation in Kosovo and condemned the suppression of and the use of force against the Kosovar Albanians by Serbian Special Police, which has led to the death of many civilians, including women and children. The use of force and violence must be rejected, and the authorities in Belgrade should take the necessary steps so that the rights of the Kosovar Albanian community are fully guaranteed. Furthermore, the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should be persuaded that as far as the international community is concerned, the solution to the problem can be found only in a genuine and serious process of political negotiations with the ethnic minority in Kosovo.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the solution to the problem in Kosovo lies in respecting the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the one hand, and finding an agreed formula for the political future of the Kosovar Albanian community through political dialogue on the other.

The twenty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in Qatar from 15 to 17 March 1998, expressed deep concern about the violation of the political and human rights of the Kosovar Albanian community, which constitutes about 90 per cent of the entire population in Kosovo. The meeting condemned the use of force by Serbian police against the Albanian minority and called for the withdrawal of military forces from Kosovo.

The Islamic Republic of Iran supports the resolution just adopted in the context of the international efforts to curb further bloodshed in Kosovo and bring a political solution to the conflict. We call upon both sides to exercise restraint and engage in serious political negotiations without preconditions on the political status of Kosovo.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remained seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.